

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

A complete list of all the presently or formerly pending claims in the application is provided below, with suitable headings to show the status of each claim and, where appropriate, its current text.

Listing of Claims:

1. (Currently Amended) A method of operating a gaming system having a central authority associated with a database and interconnected to a plurality of gaming machines, comprising:

establishing in the database a player account associated with at least one player;

providing a player card to the one player, said player card being associated with the player account;

identifying a start of a first regular gaming session associated with the player account, wherein said start of the first regular gaming session occurs in response to an insertion of the player card into the one gaming machine;

identifying an end of the first regular gaming session associated with the player account, wherein said end of the first regular gaming session occurs in response to a removal of the player card from the one gaming machine;

collecting first activity data from the one gaming machine, wherein said first activity data corresponds to player activity on the one gaming machine that occurred during the first regular gaming session;

subsequent to the removal of the player card from the one gaming machine, identifying a start of a first virtual gaming session associated with the player account, wherein said start of the first virtual gaming session occurs in response to an entry of value on the one gaming machine indication that the removal of the player card occurred while a game was in progress

on the one gaming machine, while credits were available for play on the one gaming machine,
or both;

identifying an end of the first virtual gaming session associated with the player account,
wherein said end of the first virtual gaming session occurs ~~before the start of the first regular~~
~~gaming session and~~ in response to ~~[[the]] either re-~~insertion of the player card into the one
gaming machine ~~or all credits left over from the regular gaming session being spent;~~

collecting second activity data from the one gaming machine, wherein said second
activity data corresponds to player activity on the one gaming machine that occurred during the
first virtual gaming session;

transmitting the first activity data and the second activity data to the central authority;
and

storing in the player account of the database information based on the first activity data
and the second activity data.

2. (Previously Presented) A method according to claim 1 wherein said step of transmitting
consists of transmitting the first activity data and the second activity data at two separate times.

3. (Original) A method according to claim 2 wherein said first activity data is transmitted at
the end of said first regular gaming session and said second activity data is transmitted at the end of
said first virtual gaming session.

4-91. (Canceled).

92. (Previously Presented) The method according to claim 1 wherein the value entered on the one gaming machine comprises coins.

93. (Canceled).

94. (Currently Amended) The method according to claim [[93]] 1 and further including:

identifying a start of a second regular gaming session associated with the player account, wherein said start of said second regular gaming session occurs after the end of the first virtual gaming session and in response to the re-insertion of the player card into the one gaming machine;

identifying an end of the second regular gaming session associated with the player account, wherein said end of the second regular gaming session occurs in response to a second removal of the player card from the one gaming machine;

collecting third activity data from the one gaming machine, wherein said third activity data corresponds to player activity on the one gaming machine that occurred during the second regular gaming session;

transmitting the third activity data to the central authority; and

storing in the player account of the database information based on the third activity data.

95-97. (Canceled).

98. (New) A method according to claim 94, wherein the second activity data is combined with the third activity data and transmitted as combined session data at the end of the second regular gaming session.